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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MUSCAT 000292

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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP, G/TIP, AND DRL
DS/IP/NEA FOR JLEAZIER

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [KCRM](#) [MU](#)
SUBJECT: A WINDOW INTO CRIME IN OMAN - 2007 STATISTICS FROM
THE PUBLIC PROSECUTION

REF: A. MUSCAT 286
[1](#)B. 07 MUSCAT 83
[1](#)C. MUSCAT 138
[1](#)D. MUSCAT 184

Classified By: Ambassador Gary A. Grappo for Reasons 1.4 b/d.

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Attorney General Hussain Ali Zaher al-Helali recently provided the Ambassador a copy of the Office of Public Prosecution's raw data crime report from 2007. The statistics offer rare insight into the nature of crime in Oman, including categories and numbers of violent crimes as well as personal or social infractions that the Public Prosecution investigated last year. The provision of the report was unprecedented as the Omani government historically has not shared this kind of data with foreign governments; the Attorney General commented that it showed Oman's willingness to cooperate with the Embassy. End summary.

Presentation of the Data

[1](#)2. (C) During an April 14 meeting with the Ambassador (ref A) to discuss trafficking in person (TIP), Attorney General Helali gave the Ambassador official 2007 statistics on crime in Oman. The Attorney General called the Ambassador's attention to categories of trafficking-related crimes, such as prostitution, to show that Oman is taking concerted action against TIP. However, the data covers all criminal offenses referred to the Public Prosecution in 2007, including seemingly insignificant infractions such as "Dumping Dirt between Houses and in Public Places" to more serious crimes such as murder and arms trafficking.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The Public Prosecution's statistics catalog the number of defendants - separated by gender and nationality according to specific crime - who were the subject of criminal investigation during 2007. The data do not define the different crime categories, mention the outcome of investigations, or specify how many of the defendants were eventually arraigned, convicted or sentenced. The statistics list 11 categories of nationality and ethnicity, identifying defendants as either Omani; Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) citizen; Arab; Indian; Bangladeshi; Sri Lankan; Pakistani; Iranian; Filipino; European; or Other. Out of a total of 26,799 people under investigation in 2007, Omani men accounted for 57.7% of the total number of defendants, followed by Pakistani men (10.3%), Indian men (6.6%), Arab

men (5.3%), and Omani women (4.3%).

Weapons, Murder and Drugs

14. (C) Approximately 17% of the total number of defendants was investigated for crimes related to the illicit movement of arms and ammunition into or through Oman. (Note: Police have told emboffs separately that there is an active trade in small arms, mostly handguns, which follow routes from Yemen and Oman's northern Batinah Coast to the United Arab Emirates (ref B). End note.) Eight defendants were investigated on charges of weapons smuggling and 129 for "trafficking in arms." The Public Prosecution initiated criminal investigations against 4,347 defendants for "smuggling of ammunition" - the largest number of defendants in any single crime category. 1,965 of the defendants were identified as Pakistani men; 821 as non-GCC Arabs. An additional 448 of the defendants were said to be Iranian. (Note: Without more information on the specific definition or nature of the crime, or what threshold might trigger action from the Public Prosecution, post cannot tell from the statistics alone whether smuggling was the primary or ancillary offense or the amount of weapons or ammunition involved. End note.)

15. (SBU) The Public Prosecution investigated 17 defendants on charges of "murder" and nine more for "attempted murder." 195 defendants were accused of "homicide." (Note: The statistics do not define homicide, which may include acts of negligence, or how it is distinct from murder. End note.) Of these crimes, two women were investigated on murder charges, 11 for homicide, and one on a claim of infanticide.

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16. (SBU) A total of 553 defendants faced drug-related charges; the vast majority of them -- 478 -- were identified as Omani men. The specific crimes and number of defendants in each were: trafficking in narcotics (40); use of narcotics (339); facilitating the use of narcotics (2); possession of narcotics (163); and smuggling of narcotics (9).

Trafficking In Persons

17. (C) The Attorney General pointed out several categories of crime in which defendants may have committed TIP offenses. He confirmed, however, that the Public Prosecution did not initiate any investigations during 2007 for the crime of "trafficking in slaves" under Article 261 of Oman's Penal Code, which is the closest specific reference to TIP in existing law (refs C & D). He emphasized his office's efforts to prevent trafficking for sexual exploitation, particularly by targeting pimps and brothel managers -- the statistics show that only 25 out of the 99 defendants involved in prostitution investigations last year were women.

Moreover, there were 486 defendants in cases involving violations of the Labor Law, and 1,959 defendants investigated for the crime of "deprivation of liberty." (Note: The Attorney General commented that most labor cases are civil matters and fall outside the jurisdiction of the Public Prosecution. An Assistant Attorney General separately told poloff that most deprivation of liberty cases involve domestic disputes between husbands and wives or fathers and their children. End note.)

Landlords Under Fire

18. (SBU) Other criminal categories with a large number of defendants include "violating rent disputes law," with 2,997 defendants, and "violation of domicile," with 2,332. These two crimes also had the highest number of female defendants

among criminal categories with 284 and 128, respectively. Contacts separately explained that defendants in rent dispute cases tend to be landlords, most of whom attempted to raise rents and/or evict tenants if they did not agree to pay a higher amount. The number of defendants accused of this crime, according to contacts, reflect recent worries of Omanis over rising living costs, including skyrocketing rent increases.

Comment

¶9. (C) It is impossible to make firm conclusions about the criminal or security situation in Oman based on these statistics alone, given the lack of accompanying explanatory information. However, the listing of offenses and the number of defendants investigated provides some insight on the scope of crime in Oman and the government's perceptions of threats to Omani society. In addition, the statistics provide a baseline from which Post can track criminal trends over time (assuming we are provided similar reports in ensuing years).

¶10. (C) The fact that Helali gave the data to the Ambassador came as a surprise as the government is extremely protective of its image abroad and information related to internal security, and therefore has not shared criminal data with foreign missions. Protecting the country's image, always the highest priority of the Ministry of Information and Royal Diwan, has become even more important as the country begins to count itself as a major Mideast tourist destination, especially for Europeans. The Attorney General said that he provided the data as proof that he is open to further cooperation and data sharing with the Embassy -- an opportunity that Post intends to pursue. End comment.
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